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Protecting and enhancing the Central Coast since 1971

Mr. Tim Shular
Department of Conservation
ATTN: Aquifer Exemption
801 K Street, MS24-02
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Public Comment on the Proposed Aquifer Exemption in the Arroyo Grande Oilfield

Dear Mr. Schular,

The Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo County (ECOSLO) has comments regarding the Proposed Aquifer Exemption in the Arroyo Grande Oilfield. Our focus since we were founded in 1971 is on enhancing and protecting our beautiful, natural environment. ECOSLO is well known for advocating important issues, supporting trail work days, leading guided hikes, organizing beach cleanups, and for being a center for environmental issues and causes.

ECOSLO and its membership oppose the exception to the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. The applicant has failed to prove that the boundaries of the proposed expanded exemption area are impenetrable and will not affect other contiguous drinking water sources.

Water is life. Water is a very precious resource, especially in California. We can not take chances on this limited resource. The responsibility must be on the applicant/developer to prove their actions will do no harm to aquifers or the environment.

No contingency or emergency plan is included in the application or the presentation by Freeport-McMoRan. These types of infrastructure projects are capable of failure from man made and/or natural disasters. In this case the consequences could be catastrophic to the watershed and aquifers (including aquifers covered by the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act). Failure to plan is a plan to fail.

Other oil developers in San Luis Obispo have left huge environmental disasters (ie: Avila Beach, Tank Farm and Guadalupe) costing millions of dollars in cleanup costs and compromising fragile ecosystems. San Luis Obispo County cannot afford to take chances with its limited water supplies.

For these reasons, myself and the ECOSLO Board of Directors, on behalf of our members and supporters, respectfully request the Department of Conservation deny the proposed exemption.

Sincerely,

Mary A. Ciesinski
ECOSLO Executive Director